



Farmer Managed Natural Regeneration Access to land by women and youth

An advocacy and lobbying tool

Farmer Managed Natural Regeneration is an approach of recovering and multiplying indigenous trees on forested and farmlands through regenerating stumps, germination of seeds in soils (in the seed bank) and roots that coppice into trees. Women and youth FMNR champions have embraced the model as a low-cost approach to restoring and re-greening landscapes to increase tree cover, enhancing biodiversity, enhancing water resources, and building resilience to climate change. However, as they do so, women and youth face challenges which have to be addressed by policy and decision makers at national and sub-national levels, to enhance uptake and adoption of FMNR.

Women and children in farming communities have crafted for themselves jobs, and benefit from regenerating trees for firewood, fruits, herbs, enhancement of water resources, food as well as the long awaited carbon credits schemes.

With the realisation that women and youth are generating benefits, there is need to create further advocacy and lobbying of policy and decision makers, to enact guidelines that will make FMNR thrive.



Vi Agroforestry



FMNR in West Nile, Uganda, demonstration on how to prune naturally growing trees. This was during a training session organised in 2021. Women demonstrated knowledge of FMNR model

Scenarios between Women and Men in FMNR in Uganda.

1. **Labour:** In FMNR plots, women do the weeding, pruning, thinning and managing coppices of trees but once the stem is large enough for timber, men get involved in management of trees, claim sole ownership and control. In many cases, women are the initiators of the FMNR plots, weed them and prune them. This effort however is not credited financially as trees reach maturity.
2. **Income:** It is common that husbands and wives do not necessarily share their incomes. Women may earn their own money by selling produce such as firewood and fruits but women and youth hold onto lesser income compared to men. Men own almost all income earning enterprises leaving women and youth with the less earning ventures.
3. **Markets:** Women tend to sell their FMNR produce close to home. However, a woman may request the husband to take her firewood for sale in a nearby trading centre who may never reveal the exact sale amount. Equally so for fruits from FMNR plots such as jack-fruit, mangoes and oranges.
4. **Information and knowledge.** Women are less likely to attend extension meetings, training session, organized by a farmers' association, and are less educated, and have limited access to FMNR practices, information on integration of income generating activities into FMNR model.
5. **Decision making.** Men often make the key decisions in the home regarding resource and asset access, use and control. The women have to wait for the men to decide what to do and such decisions are usually in their favour. For example, a man may be interested in regenerating timber species yet the woman is interested in regenerating fruit trees to meet nutritional needs of the children.
6. **Rights.** In many traditional settings, women are not given full custody as land owners, they access and use land through their husbands, sons and fathers. Women are denied land rights when their husbands die. Women have no credit schemes and have no meaningful gains without such rights.

Therefore women face imbalance in sharing the right to enter an area; to use or withdraw; to obtain FMNR resources (timber, firewood or fruits, honey, mushrooms) and the right to remove products from the forest.



A young FMNR champion looks after bees in his established FMNR plot. He now harvests honey, wax and propolis from which he earns income alongside other livelihoods. He wants to start a winery.

The youth are involved, too.

The youth do a surprising amount of work in the FMNR plots:

- They weed regenerating trees, and the crops that inter-cropped therein, they dig trenches, plant hedges and live fences around the FMNR plot.
- They scare destructive vermin like monkeys and baboons from fruit trees and other crops like mangoes, jack fruits, oranges, and sometimes birds that come to feed on the inter-crops such as maize, sorghum, millet and rice. And, in conservancies and areas surrounding them, they have to deal with Elephants, Chimpanzees and other animals to scare them from crops.
- They collect firewood, an activity that require a lot of their learning and playing time, for domestic use, and sometimes for sale.
- They collect fruits from FMNR trees for sale in markets which are sometimes, are far away from homes. Sometimes, they collect fruits for sale and the money generated pays school fees for siblings.
- They manage beehives, to harness honey, wax, propolis etc. from which they generate revenue for their upkeep.
- They grow climbing crops like the oyster nuts, scrubbing sponges, passion fruits, and lima beans, which, again, are a source of income that can be used to pay school fees and cater for additional household items.

In return, youth benefit in terms of school fees, scholastic materials, health care and clothing in addition to food that contributes to their nutrition. Parents often exploit children in terms of child labour claiming it is child learning (collecting firewood for sale, cutting logs for charcoal production, fruits for selling). This is a role that would have been taken care of by men.

What women and the youth are doing differently.

Women and youth are re-greening their gardens, despite not having rights to use, sharing of benefits and income. Women and children have helped to re-establish forests and trees from stumps. Very soon, they will be claiming monies for carbon, that is if men allow, or at least take a share.

Women and children practice FMNR techniques on land owned by men, with the aim of restoring original indigenous trees that had significantly reduced in the area due to charcoal burning and expansion of agriculture.

Mothers instil FMNR skills that turn out to be long term life skill to benefit generations to come. These skills are used to propagate the hard-to-germinate tree species which the grow from FMNR. In addition, support of the children to regrow to provide support to climbing food crops.

Most of the rural homes survive on firewood as a source of energy. Most rural villages have run out of firewood. And, it is the role of women and children (not fathers) to look for firewood. What they do nowadays, is to allow stumps to regenerate, and later grow into trees. The regenerated trees serve the whole country with firewood. Today, firewood earns a lot of money to the extent that men have now hijacked this trade. Coupled



Women in Rubanda District transfer life-long skills to the youth to enrich tree indigenous trees on farm.

with that, is the burden of charcoal production for the country largely depends on women and the youth.

In places like Nakasongola, Apac, Lira Kiryandongo, there are many fruits of mangoes, tangerine, guava, avocados, and even local wild fruits like tamarind. Today women and the youth make money by selling such fruits at Corner Kamdin, along Lira Soroti Road and so many other places. Today, they contribute towards the nutritional status of many families across the country.

They are now a major force in the fight against climate change, in so many ways. Apart from nurturing copices to grow, they undertake enrichment planting of with indigenous trees to improve tree cover. As such, the green house gases responsible for climate change are reduced in the atmosphere. In addition, they have created casual jobs in many market places but also work around households with fruit trees to take care of them.

What are the policy recommendations?

- There is need for awareness about FMNR practices, the institution promoting FMNR, and the pursuit of issues of land holding for FMNR model. More effort is need for sensitization, training and awareness creation for national and local leaders and cultural heads regarding the role of women and youth in regeneration of trees and livelihoods from trees through FMNR. Women and children play a central role in the survival of trees on farm.
- Collect data on FMNR on women and youth and synthesize it for advocacy and lobbying and public use. Opportunity lies in national census conducted by the Uganda Bureau of Statistics, the National Forest Management System that is under development and the national capital accounting processes.
- Embrace FMNR as both a mitigation and adaptation actions in a changing climate. Opportunity lies National REDD+ Strategy, the Nationally Determined Contribution towards the Paris Agreement and the appreciation of AFOLU sector through FMNR.
- FMNR is today a means of employment for rural communities, involving men, women and youth in different informal jobs. We need policy guidance on the application of FMNR in the rural settings.

Tree Talk Plus is the host of the FMNR network in Uganda, currently funded by Vi-Agroforestry. Tree Talk Plus works towards shaping the minds and attitudes of communities for improved land-use practices, building resilience towards climate change improving the lives of ordinary people.

Tree Talk Plus *"Empowering Communities"*

Plot. 842 Lugolobi Close, Sempagala Zone-Buye,
Ntinda, P.O Box 31833, Clock Tower - Kampala
Email:info@treetalkplus.org, Website:www.treetalkplus.org
Direct line: +256 392 177 128